

SENATE RESOLUTION 119

By Kelsey

A RESOLUTION to urge the University of Tennessee board of trustees to require the collection of an objective metric of postsecondary readiness assessment scores as a part of their student application process.

WHEREAS, in 2021, the University of Tennessee made the decision to make the submission of standardized test scores optional for the 2021 student application admission process due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, a decision to require the submission of standardized test scores, such as the ACT or SAT, would just be a return to pre-COVID practices; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly has made it a priority to ensure that Tennessee students emerge from our K-12 public education system college-ready; and

WHEREAS, to determine college readiness in our students, the State of Tennessee has required that eleventh-grade students enrolled in Tennessee public schools complete a postsecondary readiness assessment prior to graduation; and

WHEREAS, standardized testing, such as the ACT and SAT, has been found through research to be a strong predictor of college success when combined with grade point average; and

WHEREAS, with a sample size of more than one million ACT scores, ACT found that as a student's composite score increased, the student's chances of persisting in college through year four also increased; ACT also found larger changes in attrition occurred over time for students with lower scores; and

WHEREAS, results show that the SAT is essentially as effective as high school grades in predicting a student's college performance, and, when these two measures are combined,

they provide a more accurate understanding of student performance than either measure used alone; and

WHEREAS, these standardized tests also offer a check on grade inflation and add value to a student's application under conditions of discrepant achievement; and

WHEREAS, an objective standard ensures that the admissions process remains merit-based and constant across all applicants; and

WHEREAS, requiring these standardized tests gives our flagship university a competitive advantage over universities that have decided to no longer require them, as students with strong scores will want to apply to a school where such tests are considered for all applicants; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee requires a certain score on these assessments to be eligible for the HOPE Scholarship and other merit-based scholarships offered by the State; and

WHEREAS, the statutes of the State of Tennessee give the decision-making power over admissions standards to the University of Tennessee board of trustees and not to the university admissions office or the president of the University of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby urge the University of Tennessee board of trustees to use the decision-making power entrusted to them by the General Assembly to require the university to obtain the objective metric of postsecondary readiness assessment scores, such as ACT or SAT scores, as a part of their student application process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.